

The Advisory Committee

By Bertha Condé



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Senior Student Secretary

NATIONAL BOARD
OF THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
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In every college community there are extra-curriculum organizations called out by some need or common bond felt by the students. These cannot be expressed through the official academic curriculum. They represent the enthusiasms, the initiative, the idealisms of youth which the right kind of education is bound to generate, else it has failed in its work. When Dr. Charles Francis Adams once wisely defined a college as "an idea plus an inspiration" he described in a nutshell the modern campus lecture halls where ideas are caught by eager students who, in turn, go out into the student community and draw together kindred spirits in all sorts of activities where the inspiration is expressed. Thus it has come to be that the dynamic of the idea is worked out in all sorts of student organizations which help to keep the life wholesome and vigorous. The value of them lies chiefly in the fact that they are voluntary, and represent the spontaneous life of the students themselves. Athletics, social comradeship, literary and political kinships, and religious organizations spring up and express the real, unofficial life of the students.

Thus the Student Young Women's Christian Association came to be, to meet the need of the students who longed for the voluntary comradeship of other Christian students in their spiritual life and wanted a common meeting place for those whose enthusiasms were centered around a devotion to Jesus Christ and his Kingdom. Students are responsible for creating the Association and for the conduct of its activities. Its democracy and its independence should be

safeguarded at every point. It is right that the students themselves should control their own organization.

This elemental need for Christian fellowship showed itself in scores of colleges. As they came to recognize their common needs and to develop intercollegiate bonds the natural outcome was the organization of a national student movement, to take charge of intercollegiate interest and extension of the work. It also made it possible for each student Association to profit from the experience of the others. The individual Associations grew likewise in size and complexity, and began to feel a moral responsibility not only for their own membership but for the righteousness of the whole college community. In certain of the larger colleges and universities the Association was expected to take the initiative in providing for many of the personal and social needs of women students, and this often involved some provision for permanency which the transient undergraduate could not guarantee. There was need that a group of people connected with the faculty and alumnae, who had a perspective of the whole college in its relation to the religious forces of the churches and the intercollegiate student movement, should be associated with the undergraduates as counselors, comrades and friends. In this way Advisory Committees grew up.

I. Three Classes of Student Associations Needing Advisory Committees

(1) Universities and colleges in which the work of the Association involves the employment of a salaried officer known as the General Secretary.

(2) Colleges without secretaries, where the Association is nevertheless so large that problems of relating it to the life of the institution and the churches are beyond the ability of an undergraduate cabinet carrying full academic work; or where social activities, such as student employment bureaus, residence halls, boarding house canvasses, lunch rooms, book-shops, etc., are being carried by the Association to supply needs not being met by the administration.

(3) Institutions in which, as in the case of normal colleges and professional schools, the majority of the student body is new every year, and where the course does not cover more than two years, thus making a permanent committee necessary to aid in reorganization each year and to provide a continuous growth for the Association.

Associations in colleges where the student body is not over two hundred in number, and where the college administration provides officially for the social, moral and religious needs of its students, do not require Advisory Committees, but should have a faculty advisory officer to counsel with the students about the best ways of relating the voluntary religious life of the Association to the plans and ideals of the college.

II. General Responsibilities of the Advisory Committee

As its name indicates, the Advisory Committee is no more a legislative body than is the Cabinet. The responsibility for legislation is vested in the Association's voting membership, and both the Advisory Committee and the Cabinet are executive committees elected for the purpose of studying the needs of the organization and making recommendations to the membership for vote. The Cabinet voices the desires of the undergraduates and the Advisory Committee views the Association as a force to be wielded, in relation to the other organized life of the college and the churches and the resources of the outside world. Therefore, the general work of the Advisory Committee centers largely around the thought of relationships.

(1) Relation to the Institution

The committee should be the interpreter of the Association and its moral backer in the eyes of the college authorities. Just as certain faculty members and alumni are regarded by the college as leaders whose counsel is sought in important matters, so the Advisory Committee should be constituted of those people who in the eyes of the college are leaders in moral and religious thinking, who are the natural ones to

give counsel in matters of religious education. Their very names should carry weight because of their academic interest in the problem of relating moral and religious culture to student life. The Association should be on the part of the committee the laboratory for research and experiment in the development of Christian character. In turn, the committee should help the Association to think in terms of the whole university community and to perfect its methods of dealing with the spiritual life of students.

(2) Relation to Other Student Organizations

In the intensity of Association activity it often happens that the Cabinet does not relate itself to other college organizations which need the "moral jasm" that the Association generates. The Advisory Committee, detached from the student vortex, will often see ways in which the Association can contribute to the spiritual victories that need to be won in college athletics, social life, politics, and class-room honor, and can inspire the Association leaders to strategic service. In this way the committee sees the Association in the perspective of the whole student life.

(3) Relation to the Church Forces of the Community

Students are so prone to consider themselves apart from the college town that they sometimes find it difficult to correlate the work of the Association with the religious work of the churches. In this way the spiritual life of the students is deprived of much help toward growth and normal Christian living. The Advisory Committee, made up as it is of permanent residents of the town, in touch with the various church plans, can do much to connect the Association with church activities and to bring the local ministers into touch with the students. The present plans for Voluntary Study classes of students in the church Sunday schools, and the work of student pastors in State universities, offer large opportunities to the Advisory Committee for the wide promotion of church relationships.

(4) Relation to Alumnae Members

Many Christian leaders are developed during undergraduate days through work in the Christian Association. Many of these need to be conserved for Christian vocations of all kinds. Many of them continue their relation to the local Association as contributors to the support of the general secretary. Constant appeals come to every college for names of graduates who are needed for missionary work, church work, and other Christian social service. The Advisory Committee is the permanent committee which can best keep in touch with the leaders who have gone out, and continue to inspire them for other service and relate them to the needs and calls that may come. In this way the permanent Christian leadership of the college is conserved.

(5) Relation to the Vested Interests of the Association.

Many student Associations now have buildings and equipment of their own. Some have the beginnings of an endowment for the support of a secretary. The Cabinet officers change each year and soon leave college, so it is essential that an Advisory Committee should guard the vested interests of the Association. This is also necessary if the Association leases rooms or buildings for its work, or needs to guard valuable papers or deeds in safety deposit boxes.

(6) Relation to the Permanent Policy of the Association

In view of the constant changes in the Cabinet there is an important work for the Advisory Committee to do in helping to safeguard the traditions of the Association. Many mistakes are likely to be repeated year by year which would be unnecessary if the Advisory Committee, in its continuous work with successive Cabinets, did its duty in supplying a sense of historic continuity to the Association. Many methods and activities change with each new administration, but there are settled policies that grow with the years and should enrich the work for all time. There are some things that do not need to be wrought out through experience but once, and

the Advisory Committee is in a position to pass on this inheritance to the new students. For example, the Association may have spent much time in investigating the matter of student employment and decided that it was not wise to undertake it. This should be so understood by the Advisory Committee that any new Cabinet should not have to make the same study in order to reaffirm the conclusions of previous Cabinets.

(7) Relation to the National Interests

The Advisory Committee can give much help to the Association by keeping in touch with the experience that has been gained by other Associations, which is being compiled and issued through the publications of the National Board, and should interpret it for the use of the local Association.

III. Selection of Members of the Advisory Committee

The ideal number of this Committee is likely to vary in different Associations. There are certain principles, however, which should underly the selection of members.

(1) The Committee should be composed only of responsible members who can give sufficient time to the work to be of real service.

(2) Do not select members primarily because of a desire to interest them in the Association, but because they have some real contribution to make to the work and its relationships. Ordinarily the members should be those who are well known for their interest in the Christian life of the students and the problems of religious education. They may not have come in touch with the work of the Association before, but are interested in the same purposes.

(3) Experience has shown that it is a great mistake to ask members to serve without being sure of their genuine interest in the religious as well as the social ends of the Association. The distinctive work of the student Association is its character-making power, through the Bible study, religious conferences and purposes for Christian living that crystallize naturally in girls of college age; and its leaders need the re-

inforcement of mature Christian women who have great sympathy for young people and stand ready to give constructive help in the inevitable spiritual struggles of student life.

(4) The members of the Committee, according to the constitution of Associations affiliated with the national student movement, are those who qualify for voting membership by being members of Protestant evangelical churches. They thus fulfil the same condition that governs the selection of the Cabinet. As far as possible, other things being equal, they should represent different Christian denominations.

(5) Each member of the Committee should assume some definite task for which she is responsible. If there are other women whose interest it is desirable to hold for the Association but who cannot assume responsibilities, they can be invited to a conference with the Committee, when reports can be made and general discussion can be held on some subject of vital importance to the religious or social interests of the students.

(6) The usual term of service on the Committee is three years, and the elections are so arranged that the terms of one-third of the members expire each year. Sometimes it may be desirable to re-elect a member for another term, but this should not be taken for granted, as there is need for new people and new points of view on perennial subjects. It is essential that the committee members should share the faith and enthusiasm of the students as they meet old problems for the first time.

(7) The membership of the committee should include men and women faculty members who are influential in matters of Christian education, and alumnae who are still related to college interests and are not too far from undergraduate days. At least one member should be some one who is an expert in business sense and has had experience in finance.

(8) The president and treasurer of the student Association are members of the Advisory Committee, and the General secretary, if there is one, is a member *ex-officio*. When

the committee is made up entirely of women, closer intimacy is established in working together, but the main interest should be to have a committee that is best fitted to relate the Association to the institution and to the life of the community, and one which will insure an adequate financial support.

(9) A most important piece of work is the relating of the Association to the work of the local churches. The committee members should be so close to the church life that they will appreciate keenly both the work of the church and the Association. It is more effective to have the churches represented by lay members rather than in an official way by student pastors or pastor's wives. There will be occasions, however, when the mutual interests of both will necessitate joint conferences, in which the church pastors and Young Men's Christian Association leaders should be included as well as faculty leaders.

(10) The Dean or Adviser of Women is almost indispensable as a committee member, because of her intimate connection with the women students. If her duties are so executive that she does not wish to undertake the full obligations of committee membership, or if her church connection is not such that she could be asked as an active member, she may give most helpful service as a member *ex-officio*.

IV. Organization of the Advisory Committee

In organizing the committee for the first time the members of the committee should be elected by the Association members upon nomination of the Cabinet at the time of annual election of officers. The terms of office should be so arranged that one-third shall expire each year. After the committee is established, the election should be made for a term of three years by the Association members at their annual meeting, nominations having been made by a committee composed of an equal number from the Advisory Committee, appointed by its chairman, and from the Cabinet, appointed by the president, with the general secretary as a member *ex-officio*. This insures a close relation between the Cabinet and its Advisory

Committee and gives a voice to the voting membership, so that each member may feel a connection with the Advisory Committee.

If a vacancy occurs during the year it may be filled by the Advisory Committee until the next annual business meeting, when the Association shall elect a member to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term.

The officers of the committee should be a chairman and a secretary, who should be elected by the committee members. Rather than having a special treasurer, it is wise to have the treasurer of the Association act as treasurer of the committee and to have a system of receiving her reports and of auditing accounts, which insures efficiency in all financial dealings of the organization.

The Advisory Committee should appoint regular times for meetings. The meetings can hardly be less frequent than once a quarter, and should if possible be held monthly. At each regular meeting the general secretary and the treasurer of the Association should present reports in writing. Certain meetings each year should be held as joint meetings with the Cabinet.

V. Functions of the Advisory Committee

If the members of the Advisory Committee have been chosen because of their experience in the problems of religious education and because of their genuine interest in helping students in their search after spiritual reality, it will not be difficult to discover ways in which they can be of invaluable help to the Christian Association. Some of the most important functions of the Association could not be fulfilled without the help of the Advisory Committee. They may be classified under the following heads:

(1) Intensive Activities of the Association

The activities of the Association are carried on through its standing committees. Each of these committees represents some important department through which the life of the stu-

dent is influenced. Each member of the Advisory Committee should be related to some one of these committees, not as a regular member but as a resource for deepening and intensifying the work; and for doing a part of that work which the undergraduate chairman is not able to do. For example, as related to the Religious Meetings Committee an Advisory Committee member can do much through the preparation of an occasional form of service, different from the customary one. There is often need also that students should have help in enriching the expression of their spiritual life through their prayers. Much can be done by some Advisory Committee member who will write prayers for students which can be used at some of their meetings or in private devotions. How much also could be done if some member would help some of the younger students in developing subjects for meetings and would guide them in the outline of their material when leading meetings! The Association could also be kept in touch by the committee with desirable speakers for their religious meetings.

The Bible Study Committee needs the reinforcement of an Advisory Committee member who will be so familiar with the national policy for Voluntary Study (see leaflet in this series on "Bible Study Committee and the Voluntary Study Plan") that she can discuss it ably with the church pastors and aid the students in getting classes established in the Sunday schools. She can also keep the committee aware of the best books dealing with the religious problems of students, and can help them in talking over their difficulties.

The member who works with the Social Committee should keep in touch with the work of the Social Morality Commission of the National Board and be ready to adapt its printed material to the needs of the girls in her particular college. She can also do much in helping the committee outline a series of talks on the social conduct of life, if such a series is not already provided for through the Dean of Women. She can also work with the committee in providing the right kind of

social opportunities for the girls who are naturally unsocial or timid in their social approach, and there is much to be done in preparing lists of wholesome recreational reading which the average student knows little about.

On the Missionary Committee there is constant need for bringing to students the great facts of progress in the outside world and the activities of the church in foreign lands, and for the reviewing of missionary books that busy students should know about yet have little time to read.

If there are foreign students in the university there is much that can be done in relating them to the Association, to the churches, and to the influences of home life.

The Advisory Committee can also give much help through the Association News Committee by being an authority on the growth and activities of the national Association movement in its phases of work for the girl in industry, the country girl, the work among immigrants and the city problems. It can sift the material compiled by the National Board for the use of the local Association, and adapt it to the needs of the students.

There is also the important work of vocational guidance, in so far as it relates to social and religious work. An Advisory Committee member is well fitted to decide which students should take up the Eight Week Club of social service during the summer and plan for the training class for such leaders. In the same way the wisdom of a more mature member is needed to talk on life-work questions with the students who are trying to decide where they shall invest their lives. Just as faculty members are asked to judge of the teaching ability of students, so the Advisory Committee should be equipped to guide students in the choice of missionary work under their church boards at home or abroad, the Young Women's Christian Association secretaryship, or other forms of Christian social service.

In colleges where the Association is trying to fill the need of some sort of employment bureau for self-supporting stu-

dents, the help of the Advisory Committee is needed in meeting the delicate questions of adjustment between employers and student helpers, questions which cannot easily be solved by an undergraduate. In fact, there is no department of work undertaken by the Association that is not made stronger and more efficient by the wise and experienced backing of an Advisory Committee member.

As individuals the members of the committee can do unlimited work. They are needed as Bible class leaders, speakers in religious meetings, and as hostesses of social functions. If it is possible for them to give enough time to become acquainted personally with the students, the good they may do through their personal influence cannot be estimated. One of the best chances to know the students in their religious life comes through attendance at a summer conference. At least one member of the Advisory Committee should plan to go to the conference with the college delegation. The social and spiritual comradeship there will give one a big advantage in the next year's work.

(2) Joint Administration with the Cabinet

Although, as has been said before, the Advisory Committee is not a legislative body, it is a source of help to the thinking of the Cabinet in solving undergraduate problems. It is also an executive committee jointly with the Cabinet in the following responsibilities.

(a) In all matters where the Advisory Committee as well as the Cabinet are responsible there should be joint action taken at a joint session of the Cabinet and committee.

(b) The Advisory Committee is in a sense responsible for the business integrity of the Association. The budget should therefore be discussed and approved in a joint session of the Advisory Committee and Cabinet and recommended to the Association for adoption. The Cabinet and Advisory Committee thus become jointly responsible for any budget deficits. The budget should give a careful estimate regarding the probable financial resources and distribution of funds

for maintaining the Association and for the help in extending the work of the Young Women's Christian Association by means of the Field Committee and National Board, those supervising agencies which provide not only for the development of the movement in unorganized places, but make possible the publications, summer conferences, work of the traveling secretaries, etc., for the local Associations.

The benevolences of the Association, such as its gifts to foreign missionary work, depending as they do upon the generosity of the Association members, can be largely increased by the interest and co-operation of the Advisory Committee. After the budget is adopted, the Cabinet and the Advisory Committee divide the responsibility for raising it.

(c) The Advisory Committee and the Cabinet should examine carefully the policies of the Association and make any suggestions that would make the work more efficient.

(d) In the matter of choosing a general secretary, the Advisory Committee and the Cabinet in joint session call the general secretary, subject to the approval of the Association, and the Advisory Committee should extend the call and make the business proposition to the secretary.

Nominations for the position of general secretary are usually presented to the Advisory Committee by the field student secretary, who not only keeps closely in touch with the desires of the Advisory Committee but is, by virtue of her relation to the entire field and the Secretarial Department of the National Board, able to suggest names of experienced and trained college women who have proved their ability to administer the work of a student Association. Sometimes the Association prefers to have an alumna as its secretary. In such cases the field student secretary can gather facts about her experience since leaving college and plan with her for the *necessary Association training* to equip her for the best possible service to the Association. In cases where the Association has no outstanding alumna who is desired as secretary, the field student secretary in co-operation with the National

Secretarial Department is prepared to send names and recommendations of leading college women from other colleges and universities who have shown powers of leadership in Christian service. As the Association has large intercollegiate interests as well as local interests it is rarely possible for a local college woman to make a successful general secretary without some previous training in other parts of the Association field.

When the general secretary is selected, the usual business contract furnished by the field student secretary should be signed by both the general secretary and the Advisory Committee as an understood business obligation.

(e) In Associations where there is a general secretary the Advisory Committee should hold the general relation of adviser to the work of the general secretary, relating her to the various groups in the college community and to the various social forces at work. The committee is the permanent business backer of the general secretary and should hold itself responsible for seeing that the salary is paid each month and that the financial resources are adequately provided for through the Association budget and special subscriptions.

(3) Financial Support of the Association

The Association membership should, without doubt, meet the running expenses of the Association and its gifts to the field and national work. It is also responsible for the promotion of the special giving to missions. There are other obligations which may arise in certain Associations for which the Association needs guidance and the help of the Advisory Committee.

(a) In colleges where the work of a general secretary is needed the Association can rarely, if ever, provide in full for the salary of the secretary. This means that the Advisory Committee will have to be responsible for securing the additional amount beyond what the Association is able to contribute, to make up the salary. This must be done by the

subscriptions of people who are concerned about conserving the Christian interests of our large university and college centers. It is perfectly reasonable to expect that the work of an interdenominational Christian organization should need more money for its support than can be given by the undergraduates. The churches in starting their work for students in State universities have borne witness to the fact that Christian church people are interested in the religious welfare of students. The Advisory Committee, through its view of the worth-whileness of the Association, can vouch for the Association as worthy of the gifts of Christian people. Some Advisory Committees hold themselves responsible for securing all the salary of the general secretary and some secure part of it. However, it is one of the chief functions of the Advisory Committee to help such Associations as need a general secretary, and to secure a permanent financial constituency from alumnae, faculty and friends.

(b) Where the Association undertakes special business enterprises, e. g., running book shops, lunch rooms, boarding houses, publishing calendars, etc., the Advisory Committee should see to it that the finances are on a sound business basis and are not likely to precipitate the Association into debt through inexperienced management.

(c) The Advisory Committee should co-operate with the Cabinet in seeing that the books of the Association treasurer are regularly set up and audited.

(d) In cases where the Association has rooms or owns a building the Advisory Committee should plan with the Cabinet for the maintenance and upkeep, and see that leases or deeds are properly cared for.

VI. The General Secretary and the Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee serves as hostess and should furnish backing for the general secretary. Her work cannot be effective unless she is related to the various groups in the student community and is introduced in the proper way to the faculty members and church workers in the community.

If she comes as a stranger, the Advisory Committee may be able to make it possible for her to meet groups of students not in the Association. The secretary herself must prove her right to a place of importance in the college community, but her initial backing should come from the Advisory Committee. The committee can also do much in helping the Cabinet to understand what work the general secretary should be asked to do. Because of a larger perspective the committee can better relate the secretary to those Association interests that will further the work as a whole and bring the Association into its largest relation with the life of the college. For the executive work of the Association's committees the secretary looks to the Cabinet for guidance; for the outreach and relationships of the Association as an organization the secretary should look to the Advisory Committee for guidance.

There will be many problems too great for the secretary to solve. Most of them she can bring to the entire committee; some of them will be of such personal nature that she will need the council of some one committee member who knows intimately the life of the college student. It will be the task of the secretary to understand well the ideals of the institution and under the guidance of both the Advisory Committee and the Cabinet to be a wise administrator of all those matters that require more than the undergraduate cabinet officer can give.

Conclusion

The suggestions that have been made in this leaflet embody the best experience compiled from the work of Advisory Committees in fifty or more universities and colleges. At best they are merely outlines and are meant to stimulate thinking and original study. In all the work of relating the student Association to the life of the college and to outside interests that concern women in the larger work of the world, the Advisory Committee will find the Field Committee of the National Board of Young Women's Christian Associations a great re-

source of help. Through the visits of the field student secretary and her opportunities for making a comparative study of college girls in many institutions the Advisory Committee can find new ways of working, and counsel in meeting student problems. A college is a great distributing center of power, and fortunate indeed is that committee member who, by reason of residence in a student community, can have a share in releasing for the Kingdom of Christ a multitude of intelligent Christian college women who have been inspired through the Christian Association to give their enthusiastic service in varied ways to bring in that Kingdom. It is not every woman who has this chance. It is for the members of the Advisory Committee to see their great privilege and give themselves heartily to this service.

PUBLICATIONS FOR LEADERS OF EIGHT WEEK CLUBS

1. *How to Promote Eight Week Clubs in the Colleges*, by Mabel Stone. 5 cents.
2. *College Women and Country Leadership*, the study book, by Jessie Field, national secretary for country work. 25 cents.
3. *For Leaders of Eight Week Clubs* (among American girls) by Jessie Field. 10 cents.
4. *An International Friendship Club* (among foreign girls) by Edith Terry Bremer, national secretary for immigration and foreign community work. 15 cents.

Eight Week Club Packet containing 1, 2 and 3 or 4 (cross out one not wanted). 40 cents.

Texts:

Out of Doors in the Bible, by Ethel Cutler. A pilgrimage with outdoor people of both Testaments. Written especially for summer use. 15 cents.

Jesus Among His Friends, by Ethel Cutler. Six stories from the life of Christ. 15 cents.

Christian Citizenship for Girls, by Helen Thoburn. Ten chapters on a girl's relation to home, work, worship, recreation, friends, etc. 25 cents.

Note: The five cent leaflet, "Two Kinds of College Girls," containing "little stories" by Oolooah Burner and Abbie Graham, is of special interest to Eight Week Club leaders.

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STUDENT LEAFLETS

For Universities and Large Colleges

- Advisory Committee. Bertha Condé. 10 cents.
Association Membership and Church Work. Bertha Condé.
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Association News Committee. Edith Dabb. 5 cents.
Bible Study Committee and the Voluntary Study Plan.
Ethel Cutler. 10 cents.
Cabinet, The. Bertha Condé. 5 cents.
World Fellowship (for the Missionary Committee). Margaret Burton. 10 cents.
Conferences and Conventions Committee. Louise Brooks.
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Finance Committee. Blanche Geary. 5 cents.
How to Promote Eight Week Clubs. Mabel Stone. 5 cents.
How to Realize Our National Association Membership.
Eliza R. Butler. 10 cents.

For Colleges, Seminaries and Academies

The first six leaflets listed above, and "World Fellowship," "Conferences and Conventions Committee," "How to Promote Eight Week Clubs," and "How to Realize Our National Association Membership," as listed above. In addition:

Committee Work in Small Associations. Eleanor Richardson. 5 cents.

Finance Committee in a School or College Association. Edith Helmer. 10 cents.

Social Service Committee. Eliza R. Butler. 5 cents.

Year's Outline for Religious Meetings. Oolooah Burner. 10 cents.

Note: As the cost of each of these lists totals \$1.05, a packet of each will be sent for \$1.00.

Watch *The Association Monthly* for announcement of additional leaflets during 1916-17.

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